

An Australian comments on **SOUTH AFRICA'S INSANITY**

IT is supposed to be "not done" to criticise any country but one's own — even when one has lived in that country for more than the five years necessary for citizenship. So I hope that what I have to say is not looked on as criticism, but rather as the impressions of a fairly well-travelled Australian, offered in the hope that they will give South Africans a wider view of their own country.

My first impression of South Africa was — I regret to say — one of callousness. Of opulence flaunting itself in the face of poverty. Of South Africans treating their dogs or budgies far better than they treat their fellow citizens of a non-White hue.

Different Races

This was something new to me. In Australia, New Zealand, Britain and America (I did not visit the Southern States) I had often seen and experienced real pleasure in the meetings of different races — a sort of "people-may-have-been-fools-in-the-past-but-we-know-the-importance-of-human-dignity" attitude. A growing awareness that race, position, nationality and history mean nothing compared to the fact that a good man is the most important thing in the world.

Yet in South Africa, I had the feeling that our civilization has turned sour. I felt that I had come from the normal, bright bustling world of the mid-20th Century into a grey place of imprisonment and insanity, where values are perverted and reason is sneered at. A country which has kept alive the worst of the past and turned its back on the future.

Many things which South Africans tend to accept as a matter of course have come as a shock to me — a shock mixed with incredulity and a sense of fantasy.

There was the Christmas stamp affair, when public opinion was so vicious and intolerant that Christmas stamps were withdrawn because a saintly woman was shown with a halo.

The Johannesburg typhoid affair, when trusted public servants acted with as much knowledge of modern hygiene as a primitive witch-doctor.

The Sharpeville affair, when it became obvious that the firehose and the tear-gas bomb were rejected by the authorities for keeping order, in favour of machine guns. And a little-known aftermath to

Sharpeville when, with decent people still reeling from the shock of that disaster, a group of Pretoria clergymen could find nothing better to do with their time than to complain bitterly to the City Council over the sale of ice-cream on Sundays!

This is the stuff of which insanity is made. Yet there are few countries where such insanity is so incongruous. Bright sunshine, mountain and veld, brilliant flowers, an essentially happy and carefree African population, and much mineral and agricultural wealth. On the face of it, it doesn't add up.

Many of the excuses offered revolve around the South African War, and the so-called "colour problem." Yet one wonders if the colour problem is actually not a White problem.

As for the South African War, I was in Germany shortly before coming to the Union and found that the Germans, nine years after their ignominious defeat, had less hate for the Allies than the Boers and their descendants have for their own fellow-countrymen more than fifty years after.

Easy to Forget

It would be so easy to forget about these things and to ignore them — as so many who have been born here learned to do — but for the little everyday incidents which the average South African never even notices, yet which would stand out like a festering sore in most other countries of the world.

- For instance the agonised coughing of the garbage-boys as they work in dust and muck — no hygienic mask or special food for *them!*
- The undignified European screaming in a frenzy of rage — in public — at the scared, cringing African.
- The peculiar attitude that makes it compulsory to have a special licence to install closed-circuit television on one's own property.
- The way in which so many laws are administered without discrimination, care or interest.
- The unconscious but oft-demonstrated belief of so many Whites that non-Whites are not human, but are dangerous, cunning animals.

Perhaps you, as a South African, may not see these things, but they stand out like mountains to those who are, as yet, not so familiar with them as to ignore them.

What of the future? There are so many opinions held as to what the future holds for South Africa that one must turn to reality and facts in order to

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gain even the faintest glimmer of what might happen.

One of these facts is that, in the entire history of the world, no subject race has ever remained subject. Either they have had their freedom restored to them voluntarily (as in the case of the Jews in England) or they have bloodily taken it back by force.

Another fact is that the rest of the world is fast climbing the ladder to freedom of thought and greater tolerance. Australia is at last admitting non-White immigrants. America has left isolationism far behind. Britain has withdrawn from India. Canada is building dams and powerhouses for Pakistan. Norway was even thinking of joining the British Commonwealth.

It is against this background that South Africa must be seen—not against the background of her own history and beliefs. South Africa is no longer alone.

To be quite brutal about it, South Africa is so un-alone that she could lose every single one of her cities less than an hour after a group of rockets were to leave their launching pads in Russia.

South Africa is of this world. She must live in it. And she will be judged—as I hope I have been able to demonstrate—by the standards of the modern world—not by her own standards. Just as Nazi Germany and Japan were judged—not by their own standards—but by those of an outraged civilization.

—*Rand Daily Mail, January 17th, 1961.*

Two Churchmen's Views

SEGREGATION "THE WILL OF GOD"

Cape Argus report from Pietermaritzburg

THE Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Synod of Natal, the Rev. H. J. C. Sniijders, said here: "Nowhere are we commanded to wipe out the idea of racial segregation. On the contrary, we want to allege that a process by which all races are put on the same level is against the will of God."

Mr. Sniijders, who was opening the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk Synod, said: "What God has severed no man may bring together.

"We as a church cannot do otherwise than express our disappointment regarding the verdicts expressed at the Cottesloe consultations.

"We regard it as interference with the autonomy of the State, although it may have effect on some of the members of the church."

He said the bonds between churches of the same Christian beliefs must be strengthened to prove a united front against heathenism, Mohammedanism and Communistic forces.

"We believe that co-operation cannot come by multi-racial gatherings but by means of a healthy understanding which can come to pass on both a social and a State basis.

"Because we, as Europeans, are far more advanced on the road of Christian civilization, it is our duty not to do unto the non-European what we would not have done unto ourselves.

"We see, therefore, in the developing of group areas and the Bantu states, nothing more than an earnest attempt on the part of the State to give

that Christian and human treatment to all race groups which they deserve.

"We as a church can declare that there is no other country and nation that sacrifices more to raise the non-European. It has always been our duty to seek the salvation of their immortal souls in an honest, respectable and dedicated manner.

"We have learnt that because of the differences in language and social standards, it is best to form sister churches whereby all language groups and races can worship separately.

"The ethnic differences are upheld, even though we worship the same God."

CHRIST PUT SECOND

Cape Times report from Durban

THE Most Rev. Denis E. Hurly, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Durban, told a meeting in Maritzburg that in South Africa apartheid was given preference over the teachings of Christ.

A visitor to South Africa would get the impression that the country had two great commandments:

"Thou shalt maintain White supremacy with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

"And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love no neighbour who hath not the same colour as thyself."

The visitor would also be led to believe that a White skin had "an adhesive, fly-paper quality" to which civilization was firmly attached.

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Everything in the life of man hangs by a thread and the best crash without warning.—*Ovid.*